

The Christian News-Letter

No. 221

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

November 15th, 1944

DEAR MEMBER,

The last issue had just gone to press when the news came of the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Admiration and gratitude for what he was and did have found overflowing expression. While anything that can be written now must be in the main repetition of homage already paid, we must from our own angle of the Christian News-Letter, of which he was from the beginning a warm and unfailing friend, as he was also of the Christian Frontier, say something about what the Church and the nation owe to him and what his going means.

WILLIAM TEMPLE

Of no one in our time in the Church or, unless it be the Prime Minister, in the nation could it more truly be said that he exemplified the saying that "a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Multitudes in this country and throughout the world felt that here was a man of unquestionable integrity, standing firmly on principle, knowing where he wanted to go and able and willing to give a lead. That strong bulwark has been taken from us.

In the uncertain years that lie ahead, which may be more difficult even than those of the war, his was the voice that might in a critical moment have revealed most clearly to the nation the right course to take and rallied opinion to follow it. He has left us as a legacy the seed-thoughts that were in his mind in the collection of addresses delivered since he became Archbishop of Canterbury and published this year under the title *The Church Looks Forward*.¹

In what has come to be known as the ecumenical movement he held a unique place. In 1929 he succeeded Bishop Brent as Chairman of the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order. Through his participation in this movement from its inception he was brought over a long period of years into close touch with the leaders of the Christian Churches throughout the world. The personal friendships thus formed, his exceptional capacity for understanding different points of view, the intellectual powers which enabled him quickly to grasp what was significant in the theological and secular thought of the time, his unequalled gifts as a master of assemblies, combined with his high ecclesiastical office as Archbishop of York and later as the occupant of the historic See of Canterbury, made everyone willing to accept and follow his leadership. In all this there is no one who can take his place.

¹ Macmillan & Co. 7s. 6d.

After the retirement of Dr. John R. Mott from his chief public activities, the three men who through the width of their contacts and breadth of their outlook seemed most necessary to the ecumenical movement were William Temple, William Paton and Visser 't Hooft. Of the three, Visser 't Hooft alone is left to carry the heavy task of building up the World Council of Churches without the powerful support which the other two out of their wide knowledge and deep wisdom might have brought to him.

In whatever direction we look, there is a void that cannot be filled. It is only when we recall how narrow is the scale of our ordinary thinking and how small a part of God's purpose is revealed in our brief temporal life, that we obtain a new perspective. In proportion as we trust that larger purpose light shines in the darkness and hope revives.

UNIVERSALS

In the discussion of peace-making in the last News-Letter one fundamental question had to be held over. It may be introduced by an incident in the two days' debate in the House of Commons a short time ago on the war and the international situation.

Mr. Aneurin Bevan was arguing in his speech that the future international organization could succeed only if this country gave active support to free and democratic institutions where these were threatened in any part of the world. This led to the following exchange:—

MR. BEVAN: If democratic institutions are exposed to too great shocks and too bitter burdens, as in Spain and Portugal, again we must sustain them—

MR. HAROLD NICOLSON: The Holy Alliance—

MR. BEVAN: I say we must agree about the sanctity of certain universals.

MR. NICOLSON: That is what Alexander I said.

MR. BEVAN: It does not matter who said it.

It can hardly be doubted that Mr. Bevan was right in thinking that the foundations of an international organization are insecure unless it rests on commonly accepted ultimate beliefs and fundamental values. It is much less certain that the needed universals can be found in the outward forms of democracy any more than in the Czar Alexander's conception of benevolent autocracy actuated by Christian principles.

The name democracy may cover divergent and even totally opposed systems of life. Totalitarian doctrines as extreme as those of to-day were advocated in connection with the French Revolution. The rule of a majority may be as tyrannous as that of a dictator.

We have for some time done our best in the Christian News-Letter to direct attention to what we believe to be the universals that are the necessary foundations of a true and healthy society. The fullest statement of them is the Supplement by the Archbishop of Canterbury, published at the end of last year. It was his desire and intention that the matter should be followed up further. Though he is taken from us, the lead which he gave remains.

The diagnosis of our situation which underlay his Supplement is that modern life has acquired a fatal one-sidedness through men having

concentrated their interest too exclusively on one part of their environment. What is needed for social health is that they should begin again to relate themselves rightly to the *whole* of their true and unalterable environment, i.e. to God (more particularly, as the source of unconditional obligation), their fellow-men, nature (by which is here intended the whole range of things which we can investigate, appropriate, manipulate and organize), and the historical revelation of God in Christ. In this summary form this statement may seem obvious, but its implications for contemporary society are profound and far-reaching.

The fundamental difficulty in peacemaking is that we have to lay the foundations of future peace in a world in which these foundations are not only imperfectly perceived and widely disregarded, but are also openly and categorically repudiated. Even in the political sphere the question of ultimate beliefs cannot in the end be evaded. If the foundations are unsound, the structure built on them will in the end collapse.

The democracy which Mr. Bevan prizes, the freedoms which Mr. Churchill set before the Italian nation, spring from religious roots. The Anglo-American way of life is embedded in a theological setting, and will not survive in its present form if the theological pre-suppositions are deliberately rejected.

It is not only in Germany that the worth and freedom of the individual, the principle of toleration and the inviolability of the moral law are denied. Between the beliefs professed by the western nations and the beliefs professed by Soviet Russia there is a deep cleavage, which it would be insincere not to recognize. We need to recognize at the same time that the weakness of the western nations is that they both believe and practise much that is inconsistent with, and even completely contradictory of, what they declare to be their fundamental faith. We need to take a fresh hold of the truths to which we owe the best of what we are, and to stand on them boldly and firmly as the only foundations of a better world. It is a mistake to suppose that outspokenness about them will impair our relations with our Russian allies. Uncompromising loyalty to conviction is compatible with respect for those who differ from us and who may have things to teach us that we much need to learn.

It is true, as was pointed out a fortnight ago, that in the tradition of the British Commonwealth and of the western democracies some insight has been gained into the principles of a true social order and some experience in their application. That is the immense potential contribution which our past history might enable us to make to a distressed and disintegrating world. But there is far too great a readiness, if we may judge by public speeches, to assume that the United Nations have the right way of life and that, when Germany has been crushed, they possess the strength and wisdom to reshape the world and lead it forward from the present tragedy "into the sun-splashed periods that break beyond." The conditions which the war has already created, and is increasingly creating, in Europe give small warrant for such optimism. In large parts of Europe moral, economic and political chaos prevails and is spreading. The cold and hunger from which millions on the Continent will suffer in the coming winter

will be a source of further unrest and a growing despair. Among increasing sections of our own population there is misgiving about what the future will bring and a mounting fear of unemployment.

There is no hope of surmounting the present profound crisis except by going back to the ultimate foundations of life. There are encouraging signs in diverse quarters that step by step and in different ways men and women are beginning to find their way back to these foundations. But their numbers need to be greatly multiplied, and the groups that are feeling their way to a new understanding and purpose must be helped to realize that they are working towards a common end. This is the supreme task to which the efforts of all of us must be directed, if there is to come into existence a spiritual force powerful enough to stop and reverse the swelling tides of misery, disintegration and despair.

RELIGION IN RUSSIA

Two letters, commenting on the recent Supplement on Religion in Russia by Canon Widdrington (C.N.-L. No. 216) have reached us from members of the Orthodox Church.

One of the writers thinks that the Supplement presents the condition of the Church in Russia in too favourable a light and minimizes the extent to which it is still held in fetters by the State. Anxiety is expressed by him, and also by another well-informed correspondent, lest Christianity should become wholly subservient to national aims and policies.

The other Orthodox correspondent regards the Supplement as "an extremely candid and admirable statement of the situation," and adds the following comment: "I think that the decisive reason of the Russian Church's acceptance of and reconciliation with post-revolutionary Russia was a realization, instinctive or conscious, that it is quite impossible to meet an historical event of the dimensions of the Russian Revolution with the fury of a moralist and to judge and oppose it with abstract ideological yardsticks. In the eyes of the Russian Church the emergence of the Soviet regime was connected with the inmost pathways of the Russian people, and, in accordance with the general attitude of the Orthodox Church to the historical and national destiny of the people, the Church showed her real appreciation of the tremendous human conflict epitomized by post-revolutionary Russia. As soon as Patriarch Tikhon, and through him the main body of the Russian Church, realized that the Revolution was not a mere passing 'calamity' and 'rebellion,' but an essentially and profoundly providential event, that the Revolution was really speaking in the name of the Russian people and not of a clique of usurpers, he accepted it. This acceptance was not the mere recognition of a *fait accompli* to which one has to adapt oneself, willingly or unwillingly, in a kind of compromise and opportunism; on the contrary, it was dictated by religious motives and an understanding of the inner spiritual meaning of what has happened."

Another of our members writes that what the Supplement suggested to him was that the religious outlook of Russian orthodoxy is startlingly different from that of a western Christian, and he won-

dered whether the Supplement showed sufficient awareness of the nature and importance of this difference.

The profound differences between eastern and western Christianity are the subject of a striking article by Dr. F. D. Borkenau in *Horizon*.¹ By the kind permission of the editor we are able to quote part of the article.

The main subject of Dr. Borkenau's article is "Lutheranism," and his purpose is to show that while, as is generally recognized, the Reformation was in one of its aspects an uprising of the north against southern traditions, there is also a difference, which has received less attention, that within the Reformation itself Lutheranism constitutes a specifically eastern version of it. We must limit ourselves here to what the writer says about the differences between eastern and western Christianity in general apart from the particular question of Lutheranism.

The deep rift between western and eastern Christendom cannot, in his view, be accounted for by dogmatic differences; the doctrinal disagreements between the creeds of Rome and Constantinople are not fundamental. The specific difference which has led to the division can most easily be discovered in the difference between the eastern and western conceptions of monastic life.

The original conception of monasticism is entirely eastern. In its first embodiment it took the form of migration to the desert. "It embodied to the highest degree what, in the east, was always the practical core and kernel of the faith—turning the back to the world. Eastern monastic life can be a life of fierce, self-torturing asceticism or of quiet contemplation. But it can only be one of these two things. . . . No eastern order ever conceived of itself as an instrument for the reshaping of secular life. . . . The life of the laity was little controlled in its everyday moral aspects. The life of the monasteries also did not centre around practical moral problems, but around dogma, mystical experience and prowesses of asceticism."

In the west, on the contrary, the core of monasticism was neither asceticism nor contemplation, but obedience, discipline and work of all kinds, even physical work. It was a short step from this starting-point to making the religious orders the spearhead of the work of christianization and moral control of the laity.

The Reformation in its Calvinistic form transferred this conception to the life of the laity. Certain rules, impracticable for the laity, such as celibacy and poverty, were abolished; but the strict demands of practical morality and observance of the commandments were now made binding on lay Christians. "Puritanism, despite all appearances, is essentially the extension of the western monastical conception to the laity. This movement could have no counterpart in the east, where the secular life differed in kind from the life of the anchorites, and where the two were not conceived as two different degrees of the same virtues, but as opposed to one another."

Dominating currents of thought and life, Dr. Borkenau points out, can often be defined in terms of the chief deviations to which they are liable. The chief danger of the typically western Puritan insistence

¹ September, 1944. Subscription rate, 12s. 6d. for six months (single copies 2s.), 6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, London, W.C. 1.

on practical morality and legality is Pharisaism. Hypocrisy—to use Dr. Borkenau's term, though self-righteousness might be a better word—is the chief fault into which those who have a moralistic conception of religion are apt to fall. The deeper religious spirits in the west were always keenly alive to precisely this danger. By contrast, in the east, antinomianism and sheer amorality were the chief dangers of a religious conception centring round the abysmal sinfulness of man and seeking its cure in a mystical denial of the secular world. This is not to say that the eastern Church was amoral; its best representatives were as keenly aware of the danger as the best Puritans were of the danger of hypocrisy. But the difference remains and goes deep.

The differences become most apparent in the sects, which throughout Church history have been the embodiment of the inherent tendencies of the official Churches carried to extremes. An illustration is the position achieved at the Russian court by Rasputin, which would have been unthinkable in the west. The Czar and Czarina were not unaware that he was a drunkard and immoral, but he possessed healing powers which proved him to be a man of God and an inspired prophet. Stealing, gluttony and fornication could not in the least diminish the certainty of divine election which was so clearly entrusted to hands that could heal by a mere touch.

If we turn from these perversions to the highest types of Russian orthodoxy, we find that the spiritual experience of Dostoevsky, for example, may be summed up in a single sentence, that the highest grace is given to all types—to those who are not of this world and to those who are wading completely in its mud. The moralist, the representative of correct behaviour stands out all the time as the embodiment of loveless hypocrisy and spiritual pride, the Satanic power on earth.

The profound contrast between these two ways of life, evolved from the same Christian basis, and even from almost the same dogmatic formulae, points to a sharp antagonism in human nature. The fundamental difference in attitude has a far-reaching influence on the relation of eastern and western Christians to secular, and especially political, life. Further, the sharp severance between mystical and worldly experience in the eastern conception tends to find expression in the emergence of esoteric leading groups sharply severed from the mass life. Many strands of both German and Russian history can be understood from this angle. These eastern trends which have been analysed go back over several thousand years. They are essentially independent of rational formulae and intrinsically impermeable to a western legalistic approach. They constitute a self-sufficing approach to life which cannot be interfered with to any appreciable extent. It will, Dr. Borkenau believes, make history in conjunction with, and in opposition to, the west for a long time to come.

Whether Dr. Borkenau's generalizations meet with acceptance or not, we are greatly in his debt for opening up a field of inquiry which can with great advantage be followed out further.

Yours sincerely,

D. H. Deane

TEACH? NOT LIKELY!

By KATHLEEN BLISS

In order to implement the Education Act, we shall need a minimum of 70,000 new teachers.

"Teach? Me! Why that's what people do who can't think of anything else." *Oxford undergraduate.*

"At home when folk say, 'What did your wife do before she married?' and I say, 'Taught school,' they say, 'You've done well for yourself.' Here they don't say anything, but they're thinking, 'Poor fellow.'"
U.S. soldier in Great Britain, 1944.

We have our Education Act. At this moment Local Education Authorities all over the country are preparing plans to be submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval. Many are budgetting to spend what by comparison with the niggardly expenditure of the past are very large sums. There are dangerous corners to be rounded here. Six Welsh counties have asserted and proved that they are unable to foot their bills, and unless action is taken children in these areas will suffer the permanent disabilities of a miserably inadequate education; certain English counties are not far from this dilemma. But the frustration of our hopes for a better education for the children of our country is not likely to come from lack of finance, of organization or of far-sighted planning.

The simple question is, "How are we going to get enough teachers of the right sort?" First, by very great and long overdue organizational reform. Read between the lines of the McNair report and the conclusion is inescapable that but for the self-effacing and devoted service of many thousands of unknown teachers working often in shocking conditions the educational system (if one may call anything so gim-crack "a system") would have broken down. The salaries of teachers are inadequate. They must be raised. The field of selection is dangerously narrow. One in seven of our children receive a grammar or secondary school education; of these only one in four stay at school to the age at which they could if they chose proceed to a training college for teachers. From this narrow field we expect to recruit 12,000 teachers a year to make good current losses. We must—and will—seek teachers from different types of schools, from industry, from the Forces, from among married women who may or may not have had previous experience of teaching. Only thus will we have any hope of securing the quantity of teachers we need or of achieving in the staffs of schools that variety of experience and outlook which so enriches the education (as opposed to the mere instruction) of the young.

AN UNPOPULAR PROFESSION

When we have provided the organizational reforms which are needed, raised the pay, made the buildings less like prisons, improved training, broadened the basis of recruitment, removed the obstacles which at present deny to 85 per cent of our population who left school

at fourteen the chance to become teachers,¹ we shall have done most of what organization can do to lay the foundations of an adequate and efficient education service. But it still remains to be seen whether all these attempts to make teaching more attractive are going to triumph over the indisputable fact that teaching in this country is not in the public view an honoured and sought-after calling : it is plain unpopular. Men—and more particularly women—do not want to teach.

It is impossible in the narrow limits of a supplement to analyse all the causes of this unpopularity. We have a grievous history to live down. Fifty years ago teachers were regarded by officialdom as a class only slightly above criminals. The chief requirement was that they should be cheap and docile, and in the words of the founder of an early training college, the master goes forth after a "laborious and frugal life" in college "humble, industrious and instructed." We have never been a nation who hungered and thirsted after education. We had to be forced to take our medicine, and we now endure it; say what we will about the rights and wrongs of his point of view, the average fourteen-year old leaves school with a sigh of relief. Our teachers are, therefore, not felt to be "of us"—they are put upon us. We are grateful enough to them, most of us admit our debt to at least one teacher of our childhood; but the Women's Institute secretary, who described the composition of her committee as "Six ladies, six women, and the schoolmaster's wife," unwittingly hit off the position—teachers are commonly regarded as a race apart.

A RACE APART?

The isolation of the teacher is in part financial. Teaching is the worst paid of the professions, comparing unfavourably in salary and prospects with every other vocation demanding equally long schooling and training. This is particularly true of men. An elementary school headmaster with responsibility for several hundred school children or even more earns less, in a rural area considerably less, than a clerk in the civil service of the same age, and less than a junior master in a public school. For this reason, especially if he has a family, he cannot live with and as other professional men. At the same time ordinary people—the parents of the children he teaches—do not regard him as one of themselves. Although when children are peculiarly exasperating a working mother will exclaim that a teacher must have a dog's life, the popular attitude towards teachers is "long holidays, short hours, a clean job—what more do they want?" The teaching profession has been in the past recruited largely by means of offering free places at training colleges and universities to those who are willing to undertake to teach for a period of years. Thus teaching has provided a ladder out of the uncertainties and hardships of industrial life into something which from the outside looks safe, well paid and easy. Ordinary

¹ Readers of Miss Pearl Jephcott's admirable little book, *Girls Growing Up*, will have been struck by her conclusion, based on sound evidence, that the great majority of working girls if given a choice of occupation would like "to do something with children"—yet except for war-time opportunities in nursing, untrained domestic work is the only channel open to them.

people a little envy and largely suspect those who have "bettered themselves."

These reasons for the isolation of teachers as something of a race apart apply alike to men and women teachers, but on the whole women teachers are more acutely aware of it. It is not perhaps generally realized that 70 per cent of the teachers of this country are women. This means that the question of the place of the teacher in society is complicated by problems common to all professional women and by others common to unmarried women. Until the war created a shortage of teachers, married women were rarities on school staffs, and the teaching profession owes much of its unpopularity among younger women to the widely held theory that "teachers never marry." Young teachers, knowing that it is difficult to make friends among men if their profession is known, when asked "What do you do?" reply "Oh, Government work." In point of fact large numbers of women teachers marry every year; nevertheless, the tradition of the spinster profession remains in the public mind.

THE TEACHER'S POINT OF VIEW

The result of the widespread and fixed idea that teachers have a comparatively easy job is that the ears of the public are deaf to what teachers say. When teachers speak as professional bodies, they are suspected of being out for purely material and selfish ends, and what they say is largely discounted. The disgruntled teacher gets less sympathy than any other disgruntled member of the community. At the same time the means by which ordinary teachers can make their point of view heard, either on their own behalf or on behalf of the children in their care, are almost negligible. Nothing was more striking in the prolonged Parliamentary debates on the Education Bill than the lack of voices to express the standpoint of the ordinary teacher.¹

In the long run, men and women are going to take up teaching as a profession not because they are persuaded and bribed into doing it, nor for the sake of the pay or the holidays, but because other men and women whom they respect and admire enjoy teaching and lead normal, happy lives outside the school.

A group of young women teachers meeting under the auspices of the Student Christian Movement have been discussing in some detail the reasons for the unpopularity of their profession with many women, and the means by which it can be improved.² Their conclusions follow the general line of the recommendations of the McNair report—wider recruitment—longer and less isolated training—opportunities for change to another profession, and for entry into teaching at a much later age. What they have to say is of importance because it represents the views not of a disgruntled minority, but of teachers who enjoy teaching, realize its social importance and want to see it better done.

They begin by describing the real satisfaction of the job.

¹ Of the eleven university members in the House of Commons, two have been masters in public schools. Not one has any ascertainable first-hand experience of teaching in the state system.

² I am indebted to the group and to the secretary, Miss E. Reilly, for permission to summarize and quote from the group's findings.—K. B.

"The teacher can have one of the most intrinsically enjoyable and satisfying jobs in existence. She deals with living, growing personalities. There is perhaps no more delightful experience than to watch a child grow in intellect and character, or see one from time to time really grasp an important idea ; such high-lights in the teacher's daily round more than compensate for the hours of apparently fruitless labour."

But this satisfaction is gained at a cost of nervous energy : the teacher is not practising a special skill—it demands all she has in her to put across her subject effectively to her class and to be always responsive to the needs of very varied children. Over and above teaching she has to perform innumerable other duties—lists, registers, lost property, milk money, dinner duty and a thousand other jobs unrealized by the layman. "In the evening she has marking or the preparation of more lessons ; so that it needs a real effort to overcome tiredness or find the time to go out and mix with other people in a social way. Either she has to slur part of her work or cut out amusements. The over-conscientious suffer most."

The essential satisfaction of the job, which in turn makes for the best results for the children, is frequently destroyed, and is always less than it should be, because classes are so large that the educative approach has to yield to the technique of the parade ground. Again and again teachers deplore the size of classes (forty is common, fifty and more not infrequent), but the public at large does not understand the shocking results of large classes on both teachers and taught. Here indeed is a vicious circle ; more teachers are needed, but the profession will remain unattractive as long as the bugbear of unwieldy classes exists. In an elementary school there is not even a school or a headmaster's secretary to share what is really welfare work and administration.

TEACHERS AND THE CHURCH

The conclusion is inescapable. We are only going to get the teachers we need when teaching is regarded as a satisfying job with a respected place in the life of the community. This result can be achieved partly by reorganization and partly by a change of public opinion towards education and the teaching profession. The latter will be a long process. It was lamentable that in the debates in Parliament the point of view of the Churches seemed to the teachers to monopolize the main part of the discussion. An opposition between Churches and teachers has been precipitated which is in many respects unreal, and things have been thoughtlessly said, especially by the type of church supporter who ignorantly believes that there are no Christians and no devoted religious instructors in the state system. This situation must be redeemed, and can be, by a new confidence and understanding.

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